

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Hollingsworth & Vose Co West Groton

#### Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership

#### Hollingsworth and Vose Realigns R&D Practices for Rapid, Efficient Product Innovation

##### Client Profile:

Hollingsworth & Vose Company uses their advanced technology base to develop filters, specialty papers, non-wovens, and advanced composites to drive higher performance in many industries. These products include engine and industrial filtration media; high efficiency air and liquid filtration media; battery separator and additive materials; engineered composite materials; advanced fiber non-wovens; and industrial specialties. Established in 1843, the company is headquartered in East Walpole, Massachusetts, and currently has over 4,000 employees. The West Groton, Massachusetts, facility employs 180 people.

##### Situation:

At Hollingsworth & Vose, R&D and product development efforts were stuck in a 50-year-old paradigm. To remain competitive the company realized that they had to become a more agile product innovator. Their goals were to have their R&D team develop new products and bring them to market with increased speed and minimal waste. The company was seeking not only an appraisal of their current product development process, but also how to align themselves with the best practices of industry-leading innovators. Hollingsworth & Vose contacted the Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Mass MEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

##### Solution:

Hollingsworth & Vose engaged with the Mass MEP through the Mass MEP Innovation Program, a U.S. Department of Labor High Skills Training Grant Program, to conduct an enterprise assessment, with a specific focus on their R&D and product development system. This intensive three-day investigation rapidly uncovers issues that may or may not be obvious to the company. Through an analysis of background financial and strategic business plans, coupled by rigorous interviews across all cross-functional departments, the Mass MEP team develops a comprehensive list of findings, implications, and ultimately recommendations on how to improve the business operation as it currently exists. Through the work of the Mass MEP team, with the support of an expert in new product development process, Hollingsworth & Vose realized that they were several years behind the best practices of leading product development companies. Of critical importance to the decentralized R&D organization was the establishment of a global R&D process that would be embraced and followed by all functional levels involved in product development. In the subsequent months following the assessment, the Mass MEP and Hollingsworth & Vose have continued to collaborate. By leveraging a \$20,000 matching grant from the Mass MEP/U.S. Department of Labor High Skills Training Program the collaborative teams have invested hundreds of man-hours not only refining this process, but also the selection of a world-class Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) software tool to manage and coordinate the R&D process and the information sharing of the intellectual property that results. The selection effort to identify the most appropriate and cost-effective PLM tool for Hollingsworth & Vose has entailed a comprehensive review of the capabilities of over 100 PLM vendors and has matched

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those capabilities to the product development and technology requirements of the company.

### **Results:**

- \* Established a global R&D process.
- \* Selected a cost-effective Product Lifecycle Management software tool to manage and coordinate the R&D process.

### **Testimonial:**

"The strategic recommendations developed by the MEP assessment team have been embraced by the Hollingsworth & Vose management team and are currently being implemented. For those companies struggling with age old paradigms and looking for an opportunity to transform themselves, the Mass MEP assessment provides a rapid-fire and cost effective approach to setting the course for those efforts."

Doug Klauber, VP of Technology